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23 UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
24 FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA  
25 SAN FRANCISCO DIVISION

26 AMERICAN FEDERATION OF  
27 GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES, AFL-CIO, et  
28 al.,

Plaintiffs,

v.  
DONALD J. TRUMP, in his official capacity  
as President of the United States, et al.,

Defendants.

Case No. 3:25-cv-03698-SI

**DECLARATION OF LAURA DAVIS**

## **DECLARATION OF LAURA DAVIS**

I, Laura Davis, affirm:

1. I am the Chair of the Interstate Council of the Northeast Organic Farming Association (“NOFA”). Across our states, NOFA is a non-profit organization of over 5,000 farmers, farmworkers, gardeners, landscape professionals and consumers working to promote healthy food, organic farming practices, and a cleaner environment. I make this statement based on personal knowledge and if called as a witness could and would testify competently thereto.
  2. NOFA was established in 1971 and is comprised of seven state-chapters: Connecticut (“CT-NOFA”), Massachusetts (“NOFA/MA”), New Hampshire (“NOFA-NH”), New Jersey (“NOFA NJ”), New York (“NOFA-NY”), Rhode Island (“NOFA/RI”), and Vermont (“NOFA-VT”). Each of these organizations offer educational conferences, workshops, farm tours and printed materials to educate farmers, gardeners, consumers, and land care professionals on organic farming. The chapters also provide hands-on consulting to farmers and farms who may need help with their applications for organic certification for crops, livestock, poultry, eggs, etc.
  3. I serve as board president of the Interstate Council (“The I.C.”) of all the states, and additionally am the Organic Certification Assistance Coordinator and Soil Technical Advisor at NOFA/MA. In this capacity, I assist farmers with the process of organic certification as well as soil-building consultation. I have served in those positions since October 2015. Since 2011, I have served as Board Member of NOFA/MA.
  4. Alongside my work at NOFA, I have been an Independent Organic Inspector for USDA Accredited Certifiers since 2015. In 2011, I launched my own agricultural business, Long

- 1 Life Farm, growing organic vegetables. My business received Organic Certification in  
2 March 2013, and to become a certified organic farmer, I trained at Many Hands Organic  
3 Farm, Tufts New Entry Sustainable Farming Project, UMass Extension Green School  
4 Sustainable Farming, and attended NOFA/MA seminars and workshops.
- 5 5. The NOFA Interstate Council provides coordination between the seven state chapters,  
6 conducts an annual NOFA Summer Conference, and acts as an umbrella organization for  
7 projects of collective concern to its chapters
- 8 6. The I.C. also publishes a quarterly newspaper, *The Natural Farmer*, that provides features  
9 on organic farming techniques, certification issues, organic market conditions,  
10 environmental developments that may impact farmers and growers, and other topics of  
11 interest to the Northeast Organic Farming Association community.
- 12 7. NOFA also administers the Organic Land Care program, established by NOFA in 1999  
13 and hosted by NOFA-CT since 2005. The primary goals of the program are to maintain  
14 soil health; eliminate the use of synthetic pesticides and fertilizers; increase landscape  
15 diversity; and improve the health and well-being of people through organic agriculture. In  
16 order to achieve these goals, the program trains landscape professionals and others on the  
17 principles and practices of organic land care, as laid out by the *NOFA Standards for*  
18 *Organic Land Care*; runs a professional accreditation program; provides advice, support  
19 and cross-credentialing to partner institutions engaged in sustainable landscape education;  
20 and educates the public about the importance of using standards-based organic landscaping  
21 services.
- 22 8. Membership in each state-chapter varies. Overall, around half of NOFA members are  
23 farmers or farmworkers.

1 **Downsizing the National Organic Program Will Hinder Enforcement that is Critical to  
Protecting the Livelihood of NOFA's Organic Farmer-Members.**

- 2
- 3 9. The National Organic Program ("NOP") operates within the U.S. Department of  
4 Agriculture's ("USDA's") Agricultural Marketing Service and establishes and enforces  
5 standards for organic food production and labeling in the United States. At the NOP, its  
6 relatively small staff does critical work setting and enforcing organic standards. The NOP  
7 also inspects and accredits certifiers that can certify producers as organic. NOFA-VT and  
8 NOFA-NY have both educational entities and accredited organic certifiers.
- 9 10. I have heard from others in the industry that the NOP has already lost a significant number  
10 of its staff—up to a third—in 2025. I have heard that USDA is planning additional cuts,  
11 which would seriously harm NOFA's farmer-members, the accredited certifiers and the  
12 entire organic industry.
- 13 11. In order for a product to be certified organic, the farmer must follow certain practices that  
14 can be more expensive than conventional practices. Farmers incur these extra costs in large  
15 part because organic goods fetch premium prices. Under-enforcement of organic practices  
16 and labeling by the NOP hurts our organic farmer-members in two main ways. First, if  
17 dishonest farms are able to label goods as organic without being legitimately certified,  
18 their goods can be priced lower; customers then do not buy our farmer-members' more  
19 expensive (but certified organic) products, directly harming those farmers' income.  
20 Second, customers only pay premium prices for organic products if they have trust in the  
21 organic label. When farms claim they produce organic products but are not certified, it  
22 erodes trust in the USDA Organic logo, leading to less willingness to pay a premium for  
23 certified organic products.
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- 25

12. In the past, when the NOP has been understaffed, it has been unable to properly perform the enforcement functions that are critical to upholding organic standards and protecting our organic farmer-members from financial harm caused by unfair market practices. But those periods were short-lived, and NOP has never been understaffed at the current level of one-third reduction, let alone at the staffing levels after USDA conducts a large-scale Reduction in Force.
  13. In March 2024, new USDA regulations went into effect, known as “[Strengthening Organic Enforcement](#)” that helped enormously to restore consumer confidence in the organic supply chain. NOP ensures that these regulations are followed and that organic products are labelled accurately. In 2024, NOFA had seen dramatic improvements in surveillance and enforcement of organic products due to these new regulations and increased enforcement; the NOP hired employees specifically to be able to enforce these new regulations.
  14. For example, for many years some farms perceived a loophole in the regulations regarding livestock and labeled milk as organic even when it came from cows who had been given antibiotics before being transitioned to the “organic” side of the business. The NOP was able to close the loophole in the new rules, but the change will be meaningless without enforcement of the improved origin of livestock rules, leading to unfair competition with our farmers’ truly organic milk.
  15. Additionally, grain fraud—particularly in grains that are shipped from international producers—has been a significant issue harming our farmer-members. International grain fraud occurs when grain is shipped from foreign countries that label their grain as organic but do not truly follow organic practices. In the past two years, NOP’s increased staffing

1 levels have enabled it to tackle grain fraud more effectively, leading to improvements for  
2 our farmer-members. In 2024, NOP tracked organic imports to certify that any produce  
3 coming in from outside of the U.S. is certified organic.

- 4 16. The enforcement activities of the NOP are labor-intensive and involve actually visiting  
5 farms and observing practices. It is not the type of work where a reduced staff can simply  
6 absorb the work of departed coworkers; no person can physically be in more than one  
7 place at once. Critical inspections simply will not happen if NOP is understaffed. The loss  
8 of NOP employees means that there will be fewer staff to effectively audit organic  
9 certifiers. Any deterrent effect NOP visits will be lost if farmers and certifiers know NOP  
10 no longer has sufficient staffing levels to continue these visits.
- 11 17. As an independent organic inspector, I see a lot of farmers and small farms who take  
12 organic protocols very seriously. When other farmers are able to sell products at the same  
13 cost (or less) without a certifier inspection and without following the same protocols to  
14 produce organic food, it discourages farmers from keeping or seeking organic certification,  
15 thus shrinking the number of organic producers. This harms NOFA's mission to educate  
16 and advocate for organic food and farming.

17 **Cuts to FSA and NRCS, Including Shuttering County Offices, Threaten Farmers'  
18 Livelihoods.**

- 19 18. I understand from an April 15, 2025 Government Executive article by Eric Katz entitled  
20 *White House pitches layoffs, local office closures and program eliminations at USDA* that  
21 the federal government intends to significantly reduce staff at the National Resources  
22 Conservation Service ("NRCS") and the Farm Service Agency ("FSA"). I am further  
23 aware of reports that USDA has been directed to eliminate some of the local, county-based

1 offices across the U.S. and put remaining staff in regional “hubs.” A true and correct copy  
2 of the April 15 article, which can be accessed at this link

3 [https://www.govexec.com/management/2025/04/white-house-pitches-layoffs-local-office-](https://www.govexec.com/management/2025/04/white-house-pitches-layoffs-local-office-closures-and-program-eliminations-usda/404580/)  
4 [closures-and-program-eliminations-usda/404580/](https://www.govexec.com/management/2025/04/white-house-pitches-layoffs-local-office-closures-and-program-eliminations-usda/404580/), is attached hereto as Exhibit A.

- 5 19. Owners of small and medium sized farms work hand-in-hand with their local FSA and  
6 NRCS employees, who are intentionally located in rural counties so they are accessible to  
7 farmers. It is hard to underestimate how critical FSA and NRCS loans and programs are to the  
8 financial viability of these farms across the country. Further cuts to FSA and NRCS—and,  
9 in particular, relocating local employees to “hubs”—threatens the continued existence of  
10 these farms by making those loans and programs less accessible, creating uncertainty, and  
11 increasing delay.
- 12 20. One of the critical services that the FSA provides to farmers is loans. Farmers finance  
13 basically everything having to do with their farm—from the initial purchase, to funds for  
14 improvements, equipment, and beyond—with FSA loans. These are specialized loans that  
15 meet farmers’ needs, and they are overseen by FSA loan officers who understand the  
16 specific farmers and communities they’re working with. For example, loans for purchasing  
17 farms are not just at low-interest rates, but they can also cover closing costs and sometimes  
18 do not require a down payment. Given the skyrocketing cost of land across the Northeast  
19 and high interest rates at private banks, these FSA loans make it possible for farmers to  
20 purchase farms in the first place. Many NOFA member farmers would not be able to  
21 purchase farms, make improvements, or obtain necessary farming equipment if they had to  
22 rely upon private banks for loans.

- 1 21. Having FSA loan officers embedded in rural communities is mission critical. For example,
- 2 FSA can set standards for how and when different farmers might qualify for loans, and the
- 3 criteria can differ in different areas. In parts of the Northeast, the terrain is hilly and
- 4 therefore farms often have fewer cows per acre when compared to farms in the flat
- 5 Midwest. Local Northeastern FSA loan officers understand the number of cows a farm
- 6 needs to establish positive cash flow and qualify for a loan. Moreover, farmers' finances
- 7 simply look different than the finances of other individuals or businesses; most farmers
- 8 cannot simply walk into a bank and get a loan. Access to FSA loans—with local,
- 9 knowledgeable loan officers—is key to the existence of small and medium sized farms
- 10 across the Northeast.
- 11 22. NRCS provides technical assistance to farmers, and many NOFA farmer-members also
- 12 receive income from NRCS from participation in conservation incentive programs. These
- 13 programs, like the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (“EQIP”) for example,
- 14 essentially pay farmers for adopting practices that promote conservation and protect the
- 15 environment.
- 16 23. As one example of such a practice, a farmer may plant a riparian buffer zone, which
- 17 involves planting a large amount of plant material between a farm and a river to protect the
- 18 river from contamination. This practice can be quite expensive due to the cost of the plant
- 19 material and labor to plant it, but the zone protects water quality for the greater area.
- 20 24. If a farmer wants to participate in an NRCS incentive program for a project, the farmer and
- 21 their local NRCS employee would work together, in-person and on the land, to develop a
- 22 plan for that farm. The farmer would perform the labor and pay the funds needed to
- 23 accomplish the project, after which time the NRCS employee would visit the farm to
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1 inspect the project. Alternatives such as videoconferencing may work for some businesses  
2 but are highly impractical for these sorts of farm visits; some farms lack internet entirely,  
3 and many do not have the sort of high-speed full coverage that would be required to enable  
4 video conferencing. Only after the on-site inspection is complete is the farmer reimbursed  
5 by NRCS for the project. Thus, any delays in inspection can delay funds critical funds to  
6 farmers who have undertaken projects in reliance on NRCS's promise of reimbursement.

7 25. County FSA and NRCS offices are a staple of rural life. It is critical for farmers to have  
8 this on-the-ground assistance from the federal government. They trust and rely on their  
9 local offices to help them navigate applying for federal loans, securing crop insurance, and  
10 accessing other programs.

11 26. Many of these programs require in-person work, even beyond those that formally require a  
12 site visit. Many farmers cannot leave their farms for long periods to travel to faraway  
13 government offices. As noted, some farmers do not have Internet access, and others are not  
14 proficient at internet usage. Farmers work with their local FSA and NRCS employees in-  
15 person, and reducing these offices inhibits this physical work.

16 **Understaffing and Staffing Reductions at FSA and NRCS Have Already Harmed Farmers.**

17 27. It is important to understand that FSA and NRCS offices across the Northeast were already  
18 understaffed and overburdened before the 2025 staffing reductions began. This  
19 understaffing led to delays that harmed farmers because, as described above, much of the  
20 work of FSA and NRCS happens in-person, and these federal employees simply cannot be  
21 in multiple locations at once.

22 28. As one example, FSA runs crop insurance programs and a non-insured disaster assistance  
23 program, and many smaller farms rely on the latter program. FEMA covers individuals and  
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1 businesses but explicitly excludes farms, so farmers must turn to FSA. After  
2 unprecedented 2024 floods in Vermont devastated local farms, one farmer and NOFA  
3 member asked FSA for disaster assistance because his strawberry crop had been destroyed.  
4 The farmer was eager to clean up and plant new crops so he could earn more money, but  
5 he could not receive financial assistance until the flooded berry field was inspected by  
6 FSA. It took three to four weeks for that inspection to happen, during which time the fields  
7 sat untouched. The growing season in Vermont is so short that this delay effectively  
8 inhibited the farmer from planting new crops and making money from that land during that  
9 year. This was the state of FSA staffing *before* the 2025 staffing reductions began.

10 29. Because these USDA agencies were already operating with bare-bones staffing, *any* further  
11 cuts to staffing harm critical services that farmers rely on.

12 30. Many NOFA farmer-members across the Northeast have already been harmed by  
13 reductions in NRCS and FSA staff in 2025. All NOFA state chapters report the loss of  
14 NRCS and/or FSA staff in their state this year. We have heard that some of the reductions,  
15 which seemed to come when a number of probationary employees were fired, would be  
16 reversed. However, it seems that these employees who were re-hired were placed on leave,  
17 meaning that the significant harms to our farmer-members that resulted from the cuts are  
18 ongoing.

19 31. I have focused on a few of the twenty-nine USDA agencies, but there are numerous others  
20 that farmers and the entire agricultural community rely on. The Agricultural Research  
21 Service (“ARS”) is the in-house scientific body that helps find solutions to agricultural  
22 challenges such as pests and disease. The Economic Research Service (“ERS”) provides  
23 research and analysis of the agricultural sector, food and nutrition, food safety, global  
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1 markets and trade, conservation practices and so much more. The Food Safety and  
2 Inspection Service (“FSIS”) protects public health by establishing food processing  
3 standards for meat, poultry and eggs. These standards are implemented by livestock  
4 farmers and inspected by FSIS. USDA Rural Development helps communities of less than  
5 7000 people promote economic development through loans to farmers and businesses,  
6 technical assistance, infrastructure and housing assistance. Lastly, the Food and Nutrition  
7 Service (“FNS”) focuses on food security and reducing hunger in a way that supports local  
8 agriculture. Cuts to these programs directly harm our members and NOFA as well.

- 9 32. In February 2025, NOFA sent out a survey to its members and received many responses.  
10 Among other things, the survey asked if members were having trouble getting in touch  
11 with USDA employees. I observed that many respondents reported that they were unable  
12 to get in touch with USDA employees, or had experienced unusual delays in doing so,  
13 during this time. The sudden disappearance or reduced availability of this staff has created  
14 confusion and uncertainty among NOFA’s farmer-members and erodes the trust farmers  
15 have in critical governmental programs.
- 16 33. Farmer 1 is a NOFA member and small beginning farmer with limited personal funds to  
17 invest in the farm. Around late February 2025, this farmer reported that staff at the NRCS  
18 office have been very slow to respond. This farmer was in the early stages of coordinating  
19 with the NRCS and FSA to develop a conservation plan but reported being afraid that they  
20 would not be able to obtain essential EQIP funding that would have greatly improved the  
21 farm’s sustainability and financial viability.

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34. Farmer 2 is a NOFA member who reported around late February 2025, that they had some  
of their federal funding cut and has not been able to reach their FSA agent to get any  
additional information about the cuts.
  35. Farmer 3 is a NOFA member who reported around late February 2025, that they had been  
unable to reach federal employees via email about the potential cancellation of their REAP  
grant for a solar photovoltaic system installation.
  36. Farmer 4 is a NOFA member who reported around late February 2025 that they had  
already been deprived of “incredibly valuable planning resources” due to the firing of local  
service agents.
  37. Farmer 5 is a NOFA member who reported around late February 2025 that they lost ELAP  
(Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees, and Farm-Raised Fish) recovery funds  
to recover hive losses for this season. They had not received responses back from USDA  
staff, and when there had been a response, information was conflicting.
  38. Farmer 6 is a NOFA member who reported around late February 2025 that they had  
recently met with their NRCS agent about an ongoing financial arrangement between  
NRCS and Farmer 6. The NRCS agent advised that severe staffing cuts were coming and  
that if there was no one to administer the various funds and to help connect farmers to  
engineers and other resources, Farmer 6’s contract could be terminated. Farmers 6 was  
advised to stick to planning and not to take on any loans for which they’d be unable to  
repay if the ear-marked monies were withheld by NRCS.
  39. Farmer 7 is a NOFA member who needs to do an NRCS conservation plan for land they  
lease. In their state, NRCS had laid off nearly a dozen employees and planned to reduce  
further. Farmer 7 reported around late February 2025 that they were worried about their

1 ability to get a conservation plan. Farmer 7 reported that they were considering many new  
2 conservation practices but were now hesitant to do so because of the time and money  
3 investment the practices take up front. Farmer 7 explained: "I am not sure I want to  
4 proceed, because the programs or staff to carry them out might no longer be available. Or  
5 if I sign up, will the contract be nullified?" Farmer 7 noted how much expertise NRCS  
6 employees have, and that "Once people are let go, you cannot just rehire and be back up  
7 and running with any kind of competency. It will take years to rebuild competency."

- 8 40. Farmer 8 is a NOFA member who reported around late February 2025 that they were under  
9 contract with NRCS for soil carbon amendment cost share and mulching, but were  
10 reluctant to spend the money because they did not know if they will be reimbursed for the  
11 thousands of dollars in the contract. They could not get any assurances from NRCS that  
12 they would actually be reimbursed. Their NRCS contact was terminated, and the office  
13 was understaffed. Farmer 8 reported that the remaining staff doesn't know their farm well.  
14 Farmer 8 had also been hoping to take advantage of the high tunnel grant, but that did not  
15 seem to be a possibility anymore.
- 16 41. Farmer 9 reported around late February 2025 that they have called their county USDA  
17 offices but got no answers or experienced serious delays. Farmer 9 reports that the staff  
18 now do not know them or their projects and now does not expect any future projects "due  
19 to how poorly things have gone when [they] need to contact someone."
- 20 42. The loss of these federal employees is hitting farmers especially hard because this  
21 Administration also cancelled or froze federal grants and funding that helped farmers,  
22 including funding that was granted to non-profits like NOFA. Most small to medium sized  
23 farms do not operate with wide margins, and the one-two punch of lost federal funding and

federal services due to staffing cuts presents an existential threat to NOFA and its members.

43. When government services and farmers face uncertainty, organizations like NOFA are left to step in and try to fill any gaps. Because NOFA is spending so much time answering questions and assisting its members with situations such as those discussed above for Farmers 1-9, this has limited the time NOFA can spend on its core functions. This diversion of time and staff will only increase if USDA in fact follows through with its planned large-scale Reduction in Force.

10 I declare under penalty of perjury, pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1746, that the foregoing is true and  
11 correct.

13 Executed in Hopkinton, Massachusetts on April 27, 2025.

Laura Dennis

Laura Davis

# Exhibit A

# White House pitches layoffs, local office closures and program eliminations at USDA

By Eric Katz

April 15, 2025

The Trump administration is planning to severely scale back or outright eliminate funding for many programs across the Agriculture Department, according to White House documents obtained by *Government Executive*, as it slashes workers and closes offices at the local level.

The “passback” document from the Office of Management and Budget proposing fiscal 2026 funding levels would gut research and conservation efforts, trim program budgets nearly across the board and cut staff as part of what OMB called “many difficult decisions” that “were necessary” to reach the proposed spending level. The document assumes savings from upcoming layoffs at USDA, including those at the Farm Services Agency and Natural Resources Conservation Service, and calls for “protecting the American people by deconstructing a wasteful and weaponized bureaucracy.”

The proposed cuts come as USDA is planning to gut its Washington headquarters, consolidate mission areas and administrative functions and relocate some staff to new “hubs” around the country. Thousands of employees are expected to receive reduction-in-force notices, though the impact of those cuts could be mitigated by the 16,000 employees who have already accepted the department’s “deferred resignation” offers.

The passback document, which is considered “predecisional” and subject to change, assumes the cost savings associated with USDA’s RIF and reorganization plan. Passbacks serve as OMB’s response to agencies’ individual budget submissions. The Congressional Research Service has noted agencies can appeal certain programmatic decisions to OMB, but the documents generally serve as the White House office’s final decision.

In the document, OMB directed USDA to develop plans to consolidate its local, county-based offices around the country into state committees that would service the FSA, NRCS and Rural Development. Those three agencies employ nearly 20,000 workers and one official who helps oversee them said the change would lead to office closures at the county level.

“That would be laying off those county employees that USDA has,” that official said. “Ironically, these are the people that are directly where the farmers are.”

USDA Secretary Brooke Rollins last month called those agencies, along with the Risk Management Agency, “the most farmer-facing mission area at USDA,” which “producers rely on every day.”

OMB suggested the Farm Production and Conservation Business Center, which provides management and shared services to FSA, NRCS and RMA, will have less work to do going forward “given the reduction of staffing proposed” for those agencies. FSA would see its salaries and expense account cut by 22% under the OMB suggestion as the agency modernizes the customer experience and implements “a smaller footprint of FSA county offices.”

Zachary Ducheneaux, who served as FSA administrator for four years until January, likened the Trump administration’s approach to a beef cattle producer starving his cows to boost efficiency and then getting rid of them when those results,

predictably, do not occur. The plan, given FSA's scope of work assisting farmers across the country, is "really short-sighted at best."

"In all of my travels in the last four years, I have never heard any single producer say, 'We have too many damn staff in [USDA] offices and we hate them,'" Ducheneaux said.

He predicted farmers who do not have private sector options will wait longer to get federal loans and federal personnel will miss deadlines set in statute and regulation because "there is not enough time in the day." That will fail to satisfy congressional Republicans, he added, who criticized the Biden administration for taking too long to provide key services to their constituents.

Among the other cuts the Trump administration is looking to implement at USDA would be eliminating forest and rangeland research as currently conducted by the U.S. Forest Service. *Government Executive* previously reported USDA planned to slash research at USFS and eliminate research stations as part of its RIF and reorganization plan. It would also eliminate a program that provides state, private and tribal landholders with funding to help prevent and fight wildfires. NRCS would slash funding for its Private Lands Conservation Operations by \$773 million, though OMB said some of those cuts would be offset elsewhere in the budget.

Sen. Patty Murray, D-Wash., the top Democrat on the Senate Appropriations Committee, said the cuts OMB has proposed represented a "one-two punch" when coupled with the impact of President Trump's tariffs and ensuing trade war. She added the proposed cuts and program eliminations included in the passback would "pull the rug out on our farmers and rural communities."

"There's nothing efficient or smart about gutting our investments in American agriculture and our public lands," Murray said. "This proposal is a roadmap for retreat that would leave our country worse off."

Two programs that provide American-grown commodities to feed vulnerable populations abroad—McGovern-Dole and Food for Peace grants, which are collectively allocating nearly \$2 billion annually—would see their funding eliminated. Discretionary spending on Rural Utility Service programs that provide advanced telecommunications technology to enhance learning and health care opportunities for rural residents and funding for reliable drinking water systems, sanitary sewage disposal and storm water drainage in rural areas would be decimated.

Asked about the cuts, Alexandra McCandless, an OMB spokesperson, said only that "no final funding decisions have been made." A USDA spokesperson said that while the department was "actively pursuing plans" to reduce the workforce, it would ensure key services would not be impacted.

"We have a solemn responsibility to be good stewards of Americans' hard-earned taxpayer dollars and to ensure that every dollar is being spent as effectively as possible to serve the people, the spokesperson said.

Overall, the Trump administration said it would create a "renewed emphasis on federalism" within the department by establishing a "proper balance" between state and federal responsibilities. USDA will also realize savings by offloading facilities and launching other government efficiency initiatives, OMB said.

Congress will ultimately have the authority to set appropriations for all agencies across government.

Ducheneaux said the human impact on laid off USDA staff in rural communities will be "generational."

"There are so many lifelong, dedicated career civil servants who are working there, who could be making more out in the private sector, but are choosing to be there for their neighbors and their community," he said.

By Eric Katz

April 15, 2025

<https://www.govexec.com/management/2025/04/white-house-pitches-layoffs-local-office-closures-and-program-eliminations-usda/404580/>